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1 FEB 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Enthoven* on Estimates of Soviet Ground Forces

1. After being informed that Enthoven was preparing a letter McNamara's signature to the DCI attacking intelligence estimates on Soviet Bloc ground forces, [REDACTED] 25X1A9a arranged a meeting between some DOD and CIA personnel. (Attendees are listed in the attachment.)

2. Mr. Enthoven read a letter which he had sent to McNamara. This letter attack the intelligence estimates on Soviet Bloc ground forces in considerable detail as being unrealistic and misleading. One of the estimates involved was the recently completed NIE 11-14-62. Although many of the details in this letter were not correct, the general thrust of the letter -- that there are important aspects of the estimate which need thorough study -- was quite appropriate. It was obvious from Enthoven's conversation that he had discussed this matter with McNamara in detail.

3. Mr. Enthoven next read a draft of the McNamara-to-McCone letter which he was preparing. It covered many of the points in the first letter, but was shorter and in essence sounded like a bill of particulars in an indictment of the intelligence community. My advice to Enthoven was not to send a letter of this sort because it might only antagonize the intelligence community rather than result in the kind of basic study of the evidence and range of uncertainty which he desires.

4. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that:

a. The McNamara-McCone letter should be toned down significantly and express the Secretary of Defense's reasons for concern over the margin of uncertainty surrounding the ground force estimates.

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* Alain Enthoven is a former RAND employee who is now Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) under Hitch. He has considerable influence on Hitch and McNamara and is one of the "whiz-kids" who is reputed to be responsible for much of the "new look" in the DOD.

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b. The letter should ask for a detailed study of the problem.

c. A draft of the letter would be sent to me for comment and change before it is signed by McManama.

d. Meanwhile, I would ascertain the Agency's view on a proposed course of action.

5. During the two-hour meeting I explained the bases for our estimates of Soviet military expenditures and the limitations involved in comparing these with similar US data. It is my impression that the DOD participants obtained a better appreciation of this aspect of our work.

6. I have discussed this matter with the AD/NE and the DD/I and will bring the draft letter to their attention as soon as it arrives.


Chief, Military-Economic Division, OPR

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Attachment: n/s

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